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China Will Stand Firm at Buenos Aires

Beijing will continue to oppose voluntary targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions—including Argentina's proposal of an emissions growth target—and to insist on caps on flexibility mechanisms such as emissions trading.

- Hiding behind G-77 opposition, China is resisting voluntary targets out of concern that they could become mandatory and hinder economic growth.
- Beijing's opposition to caps reflects its long-held position that the industrialized countries are responsible for global warming and should bear the chief burden for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Coal burning remains China's main source of carbon dioxide, but government encouragement of automobile usage may increase its contribution. Beijing's municipal government this month set a precedent by banning bicycle traffic on a busy street to expedite the flow of automobile traffic, according to a Western press report.

The Chinese will highlight their pursuit of other policies that will result in a net reduction of emissions. Beijing will tout its substantial increase in investments in clean energy sources such as hydropower and nuclear power and its consideration of increased use of natural gas,

EU Seeks US Gesture on Climate Change

[redacted]
EU member states and the European Commission at the UN climate change conference in Buenos Aires next week will seek indications that the US will take domestic steps toward meeting its emissions reduction targets.

[redacted]
— [redacted] the Europeans are concerned that their efforts to meet targets—such as the British and German Governments' decisions to increase energy taxes—will give US businesses an unfair advantage.

— At the same time, [redacted]
[redacted] the Union understands US policy constraints and recognizes that US participation is vital to international environmental efforts.
[redacted]

At Buenos Aires, the EU will propose that the action plans for implementing flexibility mechanisms emphasize that they supplement domestic efforts toward meeting emissions reduction targets. If faced with defeat on quantitative trading caps, the Union will suggest qualitative caps instead.

— Member states repeatedly have asserted that strict monitoring and verification regimes must accompany any plans for emissions trading, particularly if trading is not capped.
[redacted]

[redacted] The EU will emphasize that targets must be realistic—and that developed countries must lead the way by progressing toward meeting their own Kyoto commitments. [redacted]

Internal divisions among EU members, the inexperienced Austrian EU presidency, and the newness of Germany's Government will limit EU effectiveness at the bargaining table. Union ministers meeting this month were unable to agree on quantitative caps, and several members that strongly support caps—notably Germany and Austria—already have conceded that they are likely to miss their 2012 emissions targets by a wide margin [redacted]

— Austrian Environment Minister Bartenstein this month told journalists that “the EU may have been on the defensive too long” on flexibility mechanisms, noting that EU members “regard them as essential and will use them.” [redacted]

Brazil's Economic Crisis Reinforces Climate Change Position

Brazil's delegation to the Fourth Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change will use the economic crisis to reinforce its argument that developing countries should be allowed to grow economically while developed countries take the first steps to meet 1992 Rio Convention standards.

President Cardoso last month announced deep budget cuts totaling \$5 billion, more than 20 percent of which is aimed at the Ministry of the Environment and the Brazilian Institute for Environmental Affairs. According to press reports, the cuts have terminated most environmental monitoring operations in the Amazon—a particularly dangerous development this year because a widespread El Nino—induced drought has caused intense fires throughout Brazil's northeast.

- The cuts have halted operations in the Amazon that seize illegally logged timber and combat wildlife trafficking during October and November, when the illegal transport is the greatest.

India will Play Tough at Climate Change Conference

Climate change and other global environmental issues are low-priority concerns for India's key decision makers. Prime Minister Vajpayee in March restated India's standard line that New Delhi will concentrate on economic growth and eliminating poverty and let countries that create global warming—the West—pay to fix it.

- He says India will use scarce environmental resources to solve local problems such as poor air and water quality, deforestation, and vanishing habitat for biological resources.

India did not attend the pre-Buenos Aires ministerial in Tokyo last month—despite assurances to the contrary—just as it did not attend the pre-Kyoto ministerial last year. The Indians did participate this summer in lower-level Climate Change meetings in Bonn and this month in Buenos Aires.

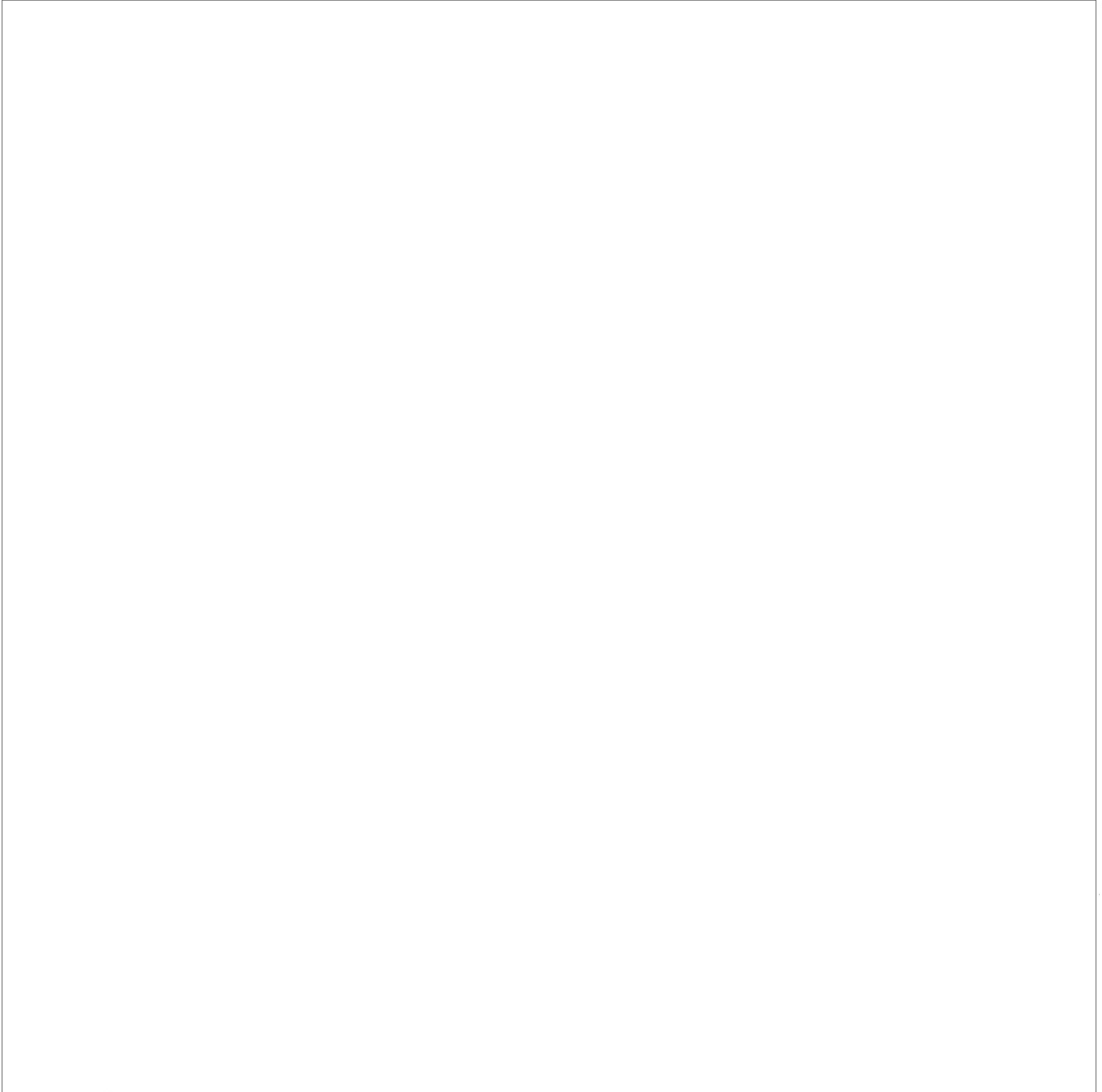
- Indian negotiators opposed consideration of voluntary commitments for developing countries to reduce carbon emissions while insisting that developed countries comply with their own commitments.

- In addition, they criticized the flexibility mechanisms—measures such as carbon trading that allow countries to work jointly to reduce global emissions—on the grounds that no country has clear title to emissions and that the mechanisms should focus on fostering sustainable development, not achieving cost-effectiveness.

Indian negotiators suggest a potential opening for more positive talks would be stressing the importance of technology transfer. India has long held that developed countries have a duty to facilitate developing country access to new technologies.

- New Delhi could budge on its opposition to environmental controls if it receives substantial technology benefits.

Carbon dioxide is India's primary greenhouse gas. India in 1995 emitted 803 million metric tons of CO₂, ranking sixth in the world and contributing 3.6 percent of the world total—but still emits only one-sixth the world average per capita. Indian CO₂ emissions have increased since 1950 at a rate of 6 percent per year, implying Indian CO₂ emissions will double to about 1,606 mmt by 2007 at the current economic growth rate.



Russia Thumbs Up for Emissions Trading [redacted]

[redacted] Russia supports the US position on emissions trading without caps and the Argentine proposal on developing-country participation in emissions trading.

- Russia, like the US, is one of the so-called “umbrella” countries that have been consistent proponents of emissions trading. [redacted]

Many Russian officials say that the best way to develop an emissions trading market is through bilateral relations, arguing that a unitary global emissions trading system will not soon be in operation. Russia is eager to begin trading on a pilot basis because it wants to sell a large portion of its emissions quota under the Kyoto Protocol, according to press reports.

- At Kyoto last year, Russia pledged that its emissions in 2008-2012 would not exceed those of 1990; currently they may be as much as 30 percent below that target, largely because of the faltering economy. [redacted]

Russia's Ministry of Economics with World Bank assistance has begun a macroeconomics analysis of the effects of emissions trading on the economy. [redacted]

[redacted] Russia could receive \$3-4.5 billion annually by 2010 by trading greenhouse gas emission permits.

The Russians concede that their most significant obstacle to emissions trading is that, because of funding constraints, they have not monitored emissions of greenhouse gas since the breakup of the Soviet Union. Moscow hopes to use trading revenues to strengthen its monitoring and control capabilities. [redacted]

A hardline Russian newspaper recently criticized US-Russia environmental cooperation—including that under the Joint Commission Environmental Working Group—and attacked State Committee on Environmental Protection (Goskomekologiya) Chairman Danilov-Danil'yan for a supposed US-led plot to undermine Russia. The article claimed the US is using environmental issues to weaken Russia militarily, steal its natural resources, and saddle it with millions of dollars in debt to international institutions. The article appears to have arisen from infighting over plans—since canceled—to merge the hydrometeorological service (Roshydromet) with Goskomekologiya. [redacted]

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Sub-Saharan Leaders See Vulnerabilities to Climate Change [REDACTED]

South Africa's Environment Minister Jordan asserts his country's average air temperatures will rise by 2 degrees Celsius by 2048, increasing prospects for drought and flooding, according to press reports. Senegal fears the advance of the Sahara is accelerating. [REDACTED]

- Regional press reports speculate that climate change strengthened the effect of El Nino this year in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, where unseasonably heavy rains ruined crops, washed out roads, and spawned disease. [REDACTED]

Africans assert the US and other Western countries are causing climate change, and they expect compensation for losses from global warming and aid in cutting their emissions. Senegal wants joint implementation (JI) projects to help curb its industries' emissions and would be skeptical about any emissions trading regime that involved developing countries. [REDACTED]

- Kenyan officials say JI projects must address Africa's economic and social woes to have a sustainable environmental impact.
- South Africa wants to increase developing countries' control over JI and other aid mechanisms. [REDACTED]

United Front, Divergent Objectives [REDACTED]

At the Buenos Aires talks, the Africans will line up behind the G-77 consensus. Among the most outspoken countries will be Zimbabwe and Tanzania, which habitually use multilateral talks to criticize the wealthy West. Moderate but less vocal states like Senegal and Cameroon support market-based mechanisms—such as emissions trading among developed countries—and are counting on China, India, and Brazil to show more flexibility in considering emissions caps, [REDACTED]

- Nigeria will join other OPEC members in seeking a compensation fund for fuel exporters that face revenue losses from emissions cuts.
- South Africa will be a spokesman for African interests but may accept targets for cutting emissions from its relatively advanced, carbon-intensive industries. [REDACTED]

Regional conflicts may distract African states active in past climate change talks. The war in Congo is diverting attention in Zimbabwe and other southern African states, and Senegal is facing a military quagmire in Guinea-Bissau.

- Nigeria is preoccupied with its transition from military to civilian rule. [REDACTED]

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Climate Change and Instability in Ethiopia

If climate change worsens drought cycles, states across Africa will face recurrent food and water crises. Unresponsive and inefficient governments will be more vulnerable to instability.

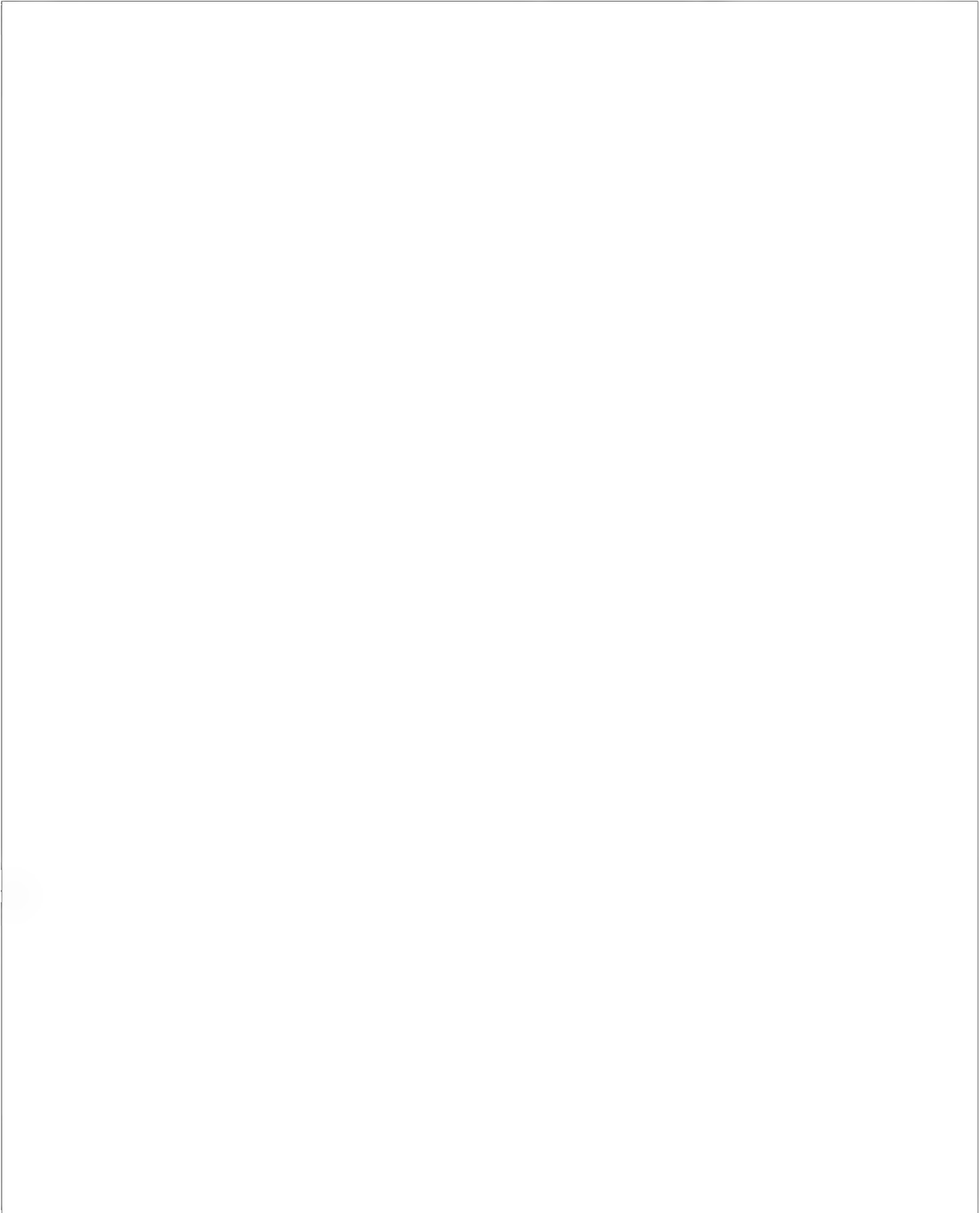
Academics note that severe drought in 1973 and 1983 were instrumental in the downfall of Emperor Haile Selassie and his successor, President Mengistu. In both cases, local officials withheld information on the extent of crop failure and starvation from the central government in Addis Ababa. Failure to acknowledge—much less to alleviate—humanitarian disasters helped spur the Marxist coup of 1974 and the Tigray insurgency that ousted Mengistu in 1991.

- many Ethiopians still farm marginal land and remain vulnerable to drought and famine.
- The El Nino last year produced rainfall patterns similar to those of the 1972-73 drought, but prompt action by Prime Minister Meles's government and the donor community averted a famine.

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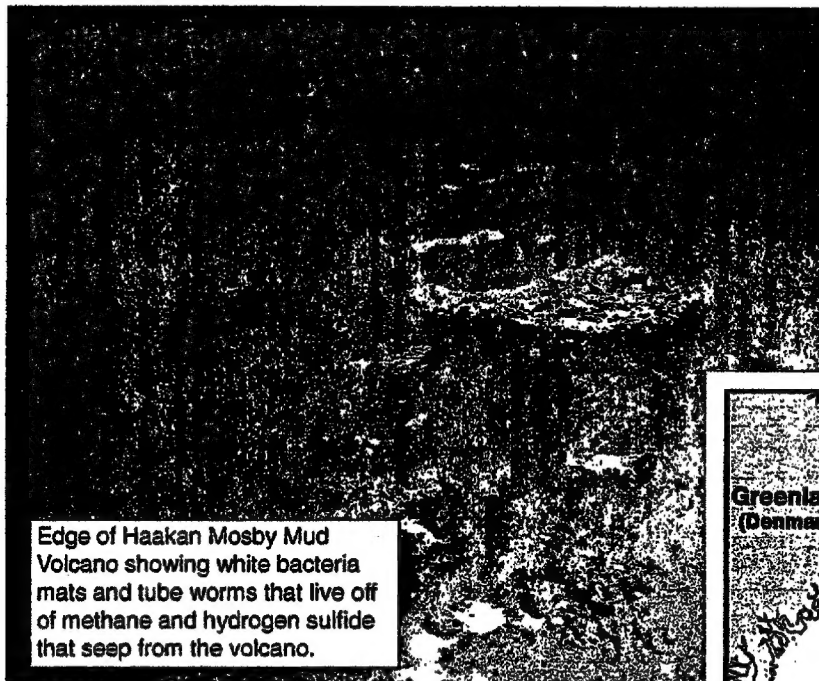


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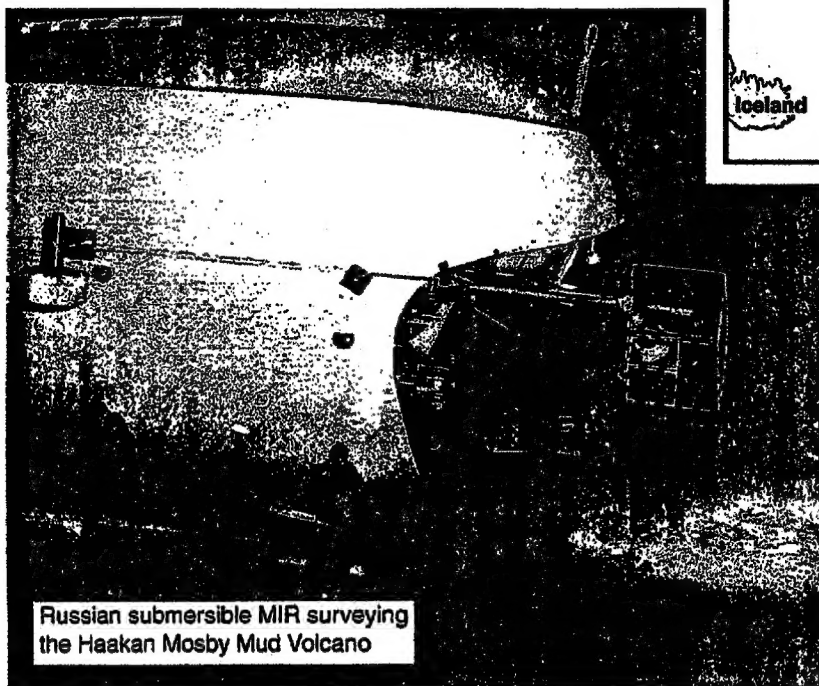
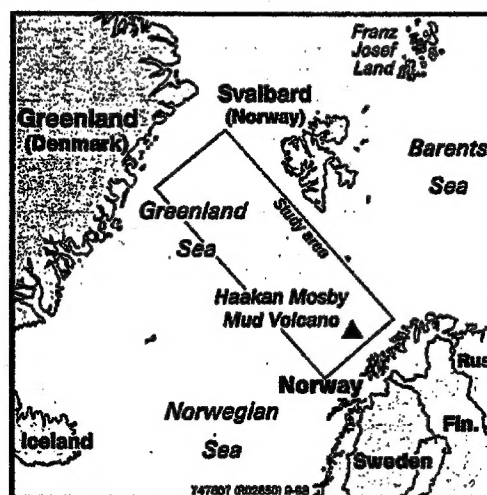


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Edge of Haakan Mosby Mud Volcano showing white bacteria mats and tube worms that live off of methane and hydrogen sulfide that seep from the volcano.



Russian submersible MIR surveying the Haakan Mosby Mud Volcano

Turkey-Syria: Strains Over Water

Continue [redacted]

Perspective allocation of Euphrates River water has been a sore point between Ankara and Damascus since the early 1980s when Turkey began work on the Southeast Anatolia Project—usually known by its Turkish acronym GAP—a huge hydropower and irrigation project involving the construction of 22 dams. Five of the dams are to be built on the Euphrates, three of which have been completed. [redacted]

Under a 1987 protocol seen by both sides as temporary, Turkey must deliver to Syria at least 500 cubic meters per second (m^3/s) on average—about half of the Euphrates River's total flow. Syria retains 42 percent of this water and passes the remainder to Iraq—its historic ally on water issues.

- Damascus has expressed concerns, however, about the quantity of the water—which covers about 35 percent of Syria's total needs—and the quality, which it says is affected by the GAP project.
- Ankara counters that it is providing more than 900 m^3/s of water and that Syria benefits from a steadier waterflow thanks to the GAP dams. [redacted]

Both countries have enough water to meet their current needs but anticipate large increases in demand in coming decades. [redacted]
Syria wants a permanent agreement that gives it a larger share of Euphrates water.

[redacted]

Cutoff Not in Turkey's Interests [redacted]

Nonetheless Turkey is not using a cutoff in water delivery as a lever in its current campaign to force a halt in Syrian support for Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) terrorists. [redacted]

Using the three hydroelectric dams on the Euphrates to hold back water would eliminate more than one-fourth of Turkey's total power-generating capacity at a time when the country already has an electricity shortage. [redacted]

- The Turkish minister responsible for GAP this month publicly said Turkey would not take such action—even in case of war with Syria—because it is not Turkish policy to punish people for the mistakes of their leaders. [redacted]



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Selected International Environment-Related Meetings		
2-13 November	Fourth Conference of Parties to the Climate Change Convention	Buenos Aires
3-9 November	Twenty Fifth Session of the International Tropical Timber Organization	Yokohama
5-6 November	Second OSCE Conference on Economic and Environmental Issues	Istanbul
4-6 November	Global Environment Facility Council Meeting	Washington
12-18 November	APEC Ministerial and Heads of State Meeting	Kuala Lumpur
17-24 November	Tenth Conference of Parties to the Montreal Protocol	Cairo
30 November-3 December	Third Defense Ministerial of the Americas	Cartagena

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